



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

### Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

### About Google Book Search

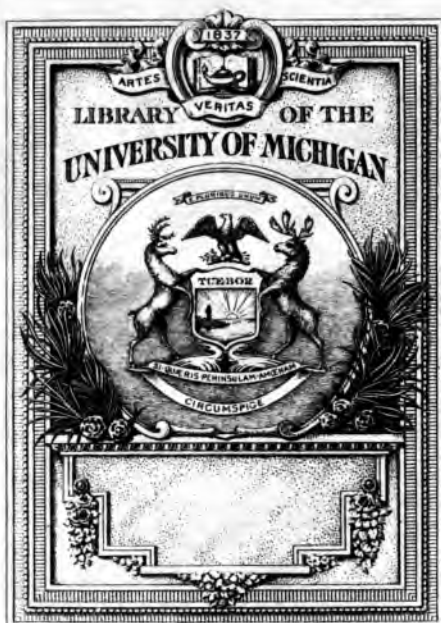
Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

2  
678

B 1,013,783

B7475

*British. Linn.*



---

LIBRARY HANDBOOK No. 11

SOME PRINCIPLES  
OF  
BUSINESS-LIKE CONDUCT  
IN  
LIBRARIES

BY  
ARTHUR E. BOSTWICK

*St. Louis Public Library*

---

American Library Association  
78 E. WASHINGTON STREET, CHICAGO  
1920



## FOREWORD

This pamphlet is an endeavor to answer the questions, "What is a business-like way of doing things?" "How does it differ from an unbusiness-like way?" "Are there any underlying principles?"

It does not attempt to recommend specific methods, still less to describe them, although they may occasionally serve as illustrations. To specify and describe would be simply to duplicate other accessible material. The author believes that to be business-like is as worthy an aim for the intellectual and the high-minded as to be, for instance, artistic or literary; and he has tried here to emphasize and illustrate this point of view.

11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28  
29  
30  
31  
32  
33  
34  
35  
36  
37  
38  
39  
40  
41  
42  
43  
44  
45  
46  
47  
48  
49  
50  
51  
52  
53  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60  
61  
62  
63  
64  
65  
66  
67  
68  
69  
70  
71  
72  
73  
74  
75  
76  
77  
78  
79  
80  
81  
82  
83  
84  
85  
86  
87  
88  
89  
90  
91  
92  
93  
94  
95  
96  
97  
98  
99  
100  
101  
102  
103  
104  
105  
106  
107  
108  
109  
110  
111  
112  
113  
114  
115  
116  
117  
118  
119  
120  
121  
122  
123  
124  
125  
126  
127  
128  
129  
130  
131  
132  
133  
134  
135  
136  
137  
138  
139  
140  
141  
142  
143  
144  
145  
146  
147  
148  
149  
150  
151  
152  
153  
154  
155  
156  
157  
158  
159  
160  
161  
162  
163  
164  
165  
166  
167  
168  
169  
170  
171  
172  
173  
174  
175  
176  
177  
178  
179  
180  
181  
182  
183  
184  
185  
186  
187  
188  
189  
190  
191  
192  
193  
194  
195  
196  
197  
198  
199  
200  
201  
202  
203  
204  
205  
206  
207  
208  
209  
210  
211  
212  
213  
214  
215  
216  
217  
218  
219  
220  
221  
222  
223  
224  
225  
226  
227  
228  
229  
230  
231  
232  
233  
234  
235  
236  
237  
238  
239  
240  
241  
242  
243  
244  
245  
246  
247  
248  
249  
250  
251  
252  
253  
254  
255  
256  
257  
258  
259  
260  
261  
262  
263  
264  
265  
266  
267  
268  
269  
270  
271  
272  
273  
274  
275  
276  
277  
278  
279  
280  
281  
282  
283  
284  
285  
286  
287  
288  
289  
290  
291  
292  
293  
294  
295  
296  
297  
298  
299  
300  
301  
302  
303  
304  
305  
306  
307  
308  
309  
310  
311  
312  
313  
314  
315  
316  
317  
318  
319  
320  
321  
322  
323  
324  
325  
326  
327  
328  
329  
330  
331  
332  
333  
334  
335  
336  
337  
338  
339  
340  
341  
342  
343  
344  
345  
346  
347  
348  
349  
350  
351  
352  
353  
354  
355  
356  
357  
358  
359  
360  
361  
362  
363  
364  
365  
366  
367  
368  
369  
370  
371  
372  
373  
374  
375  
376  
377  
378  
379  
380  
381  
382  
383  
384  
385  
386  
387  
388  
389  
390  
391  
392  
393  
394  
395  
396  
397  
398  
399  
400  
401  
402  
403  
404  
405  
406  
407  
408  
409  
410  
411  
412  
413  
414  
415  
416  
417  
418  
419  
420  
421  
422  
423  
424  
425  
426  
427  
428  
429  
430  
431  
432  
433  
434  
435  
436  
437  
438  
439  
440  
441  
442  
443  
444  
445  
446  
447  
448  
449  
450  
451  
452  
453  
454  
455  
456  
457  
458  
459  
460  
461  
462  
463  
464  
465  
466  
467  
468  
469  
470  
471  
472  
473  
474  
475  
476  
477  
478  
479  
480  
481  
482  
483  
484  
485  
486  
487  
488  
489  
490  
491  
492  
493  
494  
495  
496  
497  
498  
499  
500  
501  
502  
503  
504  
505  
506  
507  
508  
509  
510  
511  
512  
513  
514  
515  
516  
517  
518  
519  
520  
521  
522  
523  
524  
525  
526  
527  
528  
529  
530  
531  
532  
533  
534  
535  
536  
537  
538  
539  
540  
541  
542  
543  
544  
545  
546  
547  
548  
549  
550  
551  
552  
553  
554  
555  
556  
557  
558  
559  
560  
561  
562  
563  
564  
565  
566  
567  
568  
569  
570  
571  
572  
573  
574  
575  
576  
577  
578  
579  
580  
581  
582  
583  
584  
585  
586  
587  
588  
589  
590  
591  
592  
593  
594  
595  
596  
597  
598  
599  
600  
601  
602  
603  
604  
605  
606  
607  
608  
609  
610  
611  
612  
613  
614  
615  
616  
617  
618  
619  
620  
621  
622  
623  
624  
625  
626  
627  
628  
629  
630  
631  
632  
633  
634  
635  
636  
637  
638  
639  
640  
641  
642  
643  
644  
645  
646  
647  
648  
649  
650  
651  
652  
653  
654  
655  
656  
657  
658  
659  
660  
661  
662  
663  
664  
665  
666  
667  
668  
669  
670  
671  
672  
673  
674  
675  
676  
677  
678  
679  
680  
681  
682  
683  
684  
685  
686  
687  
688  
689  
690  
691  
692  
693  
694  
695  
696  
697  
698  
699  
700  
701  
702  
703  
704  
705  
706  
707  
708  
709  
710  
711  
712  
713  
714  
715  
716  
717  
718  
719  
720  
721  
722  
723  
724  
725  
726  
727  
728  
729  
730  
731  
732  
733  
734  
735  
736  
737  
738  
739  
740  
741  
742  
743  
744  
745  
746  
747  
748  
749  
750  
751  
752  
753  
754  
755  
756  
757  
758  
759  
760  
761  
762  
763  
764  
765  
766  
767  
768  
769  
770  
771  
772  
773  
774  
775  
776  
777  
778  
779  
780  
781  
782  
783  
784  
785  
786  
787  
788  
789  
790  
791  
792  
793  
794  
795  
796  
797  
798  
799  
800  
801  
802  
803  
804  
805  
806  
807  
808  
809  
810  
811  
812  
813  
814  
815  
816  
817  
818  
819  
820  
821  
822  
823  
824  
825  
826  
827  
828  
829  
830  
831  
832  
833  
834  
835  
836  
837  
838  
839  
840  
841  
842  
843  
844  
845  
846  
847  
848  
849  
850  
851  
852  
853  
854  
855  
856  
857  
858  
859  
860  
861  
862  
863  
864  
865  
866  
867  
868  
869  
870  
871  
872  
873  
874  
875  
876  
877  
878  
879  
880  
881  
882  
883  
884  
885  
886  
887  
888  
889  
890  
891  
892  
893  
894  
895  
896  
897  
898  
899  
900  
901  
902  
903  
904  
905  
906  
907  
908  
909  
910  
911  
912  
913  
914  
915  
916  
917  
918  
919  
920  
921  
922  
923  
924  
925  
926  
927  
928  
929  
930  
931  
932  
933  
934  
935  
936  
937  
938  
939  
940  
941  
942  
943  
944  
945  
946  
947  
948  
949  
950  
951  
952  
953  
954  
955  
956  
957  
958  
959  
960  
961  
962  
963  
964  
965  
966  
967  
968  
969  
970  
971  
972  
973  
974  
975  
976  
977  
978  
979  
980  
981  
982  
983  
984  
985  
986  
987  
988  
989  
990  
991  
992  
993  
994  
995  
996  
997  
998  
999  
1000

## CONTENTS

Business-like Conduct .....	5
Some Ways of Doing Things.....	6
Some Personal Qualities.....	14
Some Arrangements .....	22
Some Words in Conclusion.....	26
Index .....	31


353133



## BUSINESS-LIKE CONDUCT

What constitutes a "business-like" way of doing things, as opposed to an "unbusiness-like" way? Not system alone; for that may be carried to an extreme that is the reverse of business-like. Not honesty alone; for the scrupulously honest man may hopelessly lack business sense. Not promptness, not quickness of apprehension, but rather such a combination of all these things, and of many others, that the best results will be obtained at the least expenditure of money, time and energy. The business man must not only produce or distribute good articles, but he must do so at a profit; otherwise his procedure is not business-like. A man who advertised that he sold all goods at less than cost was asked how he managed to get along on that basis. "I couldn't," he replied, "if I didn't have such a big business." The size of a business, or the quality of its goods, does not make its methods business-like, if it is not making money.

The public library is, or should be, a business institution. Those who do not like to admit this do not realize that business, conducted in a "business-like" way, is the most honorable of occupations and the most useful to the community. To say that librarianship is a business is to pay it a compliment. To assert that a librarian's administration is not "business-like" is to make one of the most serious charges that could be brought against it.





The public library does not operate for a money profit, but it must show that it has rendered services to the community that are well worth the money that the community has put into it. The very fact that its success can not be measured financially, like that of a commercial concern, is all the more reason for making sure that its work is carried on in the same manner that would bring success in commerce.

Any public-service institution, whether operated free or for profit, is, or should be, primarily for its clients and not for its employees. When a change is contemplated in any rule, method or device connected with a public library it may be tested by asking the questions, "Will it benefit the staff? Will it improve service to the public?" It may, of course do both, but if it benefits the staff at the expense of the service, it is not business-like.

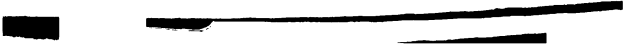
### SOME WAYS OF DOING THINGS

**Taking Chances.** "Be sure you're right; then go ahead," was Davy Crockett's maxim. But if we interpret it to mean, "Never act except on a hundred-per-cent assurance," we shall remain inactive. One can have such assurance of mathematical propositions, such as  $2 + 3 = 5$ , but of practically nothing else. What we do we must do, not on positive assurance, but on great weight of probability. In other words, we must be always taking chances. We shall be judged business-like or unbusiness-like by the kind of chances we take, by the value of the

thing for which we take them, and by our estimate of the necessity for taking them.

It may be good business to take a very big chance even for a slight advantage, where the penalty of failure is small. Thousands of experiments may be made in a library on this principle. It is always justifiable to try some new device or method, or to make some change in methods, where the experiment is easy and failure involves no expense and does no harm. In fact, in such a case it is not the experiment that fails. That always succeeds, since the result is always one more bit of library knowledge. There is even excuse for taking such a chance when the penalty of failure is not negligible, provided the reward of success is great; but if this is carried to extremes, we have an unjustifiable "gamble." Suppose, for instance that the alternatives are death and a fortune; just what risk might be taken would depend largely on the taker's temperament, and it would not be a business question at all.

In some instances, however, one is not allowed to decide whether to take a risk or not. He is obliged to do so, and his exercise of judgment is limited to the choice of several courses in each of which the risk is great. He may even lack all means of choosing among them and select one wholly at haphazard. He is like a man, pursued by a bear, who approaches a fork in the road. He must take one way or the other, and must take it quickly, even without knowing anything about either. In library business, as in other kinds, dis-



aster is often avoided by the quick recognition of this kind of situation and by ability to make an immediate decision.

**Good Will.** This is so important a factor in all business that it has a well defined money value. The "good-will" of a business may be worth thousands of dollars. It represents the combined feelings, toward the concern, of its customers; their likelihood to continue to deal with it, even if it changes hands. This is one of the "intangibles" that are so important in life, from statesmanship down to family relations. A business concern may have worked for years to build it up, and the successor who has bought it may lose it in a day. Good will is two-sided: the "good-will" of the customer toward the concern is dependent on the concern's good will toward him, and the manner of its expression.

This all applies to the library, for it is a business concern, and its users are paying for what they get just as really as if they handed coin over the counter. If their good-will is forfeited, the library loses, and in more cases than one the loss has been monetary. Libraries that receive large, ungrudged grants of public money are generally those that have earned the good will of their respective communities.

Directions for gaining and keeping good will can hardly be given in detail, but in all business it may be said to be dependent on a feeling that the relations between the concern and those who deal

with it are something more than mere "business." And this going outside of business is in itself the very best of "good business," in the library as elsewhere, and for every assistant in the library as for the institution as a whole.

In this sense the youngest assistant holds the reputation of the entire library in her hands. Indifference, rudeness, a lack of quick response to the public need, may be responsible—unjustly perhaps, but none the less injuriously, for a general feeling in the community that the library staff is not giving good service.

Two railroads in Mexico, both under American management, were long known in that country as the "*Ferrocarril Simpatica*" and the "*Ferrocarril Antagonista*." It is better for a library to acquire the reputation of being "sympathetic" than that of being "antagonistic."

**Etiquette.** The things that go to create an atmosphere of good will cannot be listed exhaustively. But some of them have been formulated as rules of etiquette. Some of these represent a reaction to conditions now past; some are merely symbolical; yet on the whole, we cannot neglect them, for they are simply a way of taking care of common sense behavior subconsciously.

A large part of business politeness is simply an expression of the fact that it is the duty of the business man to be of service to those with whom he deals, if for no other reason, for policy's sake. If he is not of service, they will go elsewhere. This

is true also of the library, where for "go elsewhere" we must read "withdraw public support."

As an example, take the etiquette to be observed when a stranger enters any kind of a service institution—a department store or a library. Some one should at once make him welcome, ascertain the kind of service that he wants and see that it is rendered. If it is simply the privilege of "looking around," it should be made clear to him at once that the privilege is his, and he should then be let alone. Nothing annoys a visitor more than a would-be helper at his elbow when help is not desired. But when it is needed it should be at hand—quick, unobtrusive, efficient.

The etiquette of voice and that of gesture are both important in a library. The most ignorant person knows whether he is being treated with courtesy or rudeness by instinctive attention to these. The service rendered may, of course, be precisely the same in the two instances. It is as easy to hand a book politely as it is to shove it; it is as simple to answer questions and explain difficulties kindly and pleasantly as it is to do so with indifference or disdain. The distinction is merely one of manners, but it is important and has business value.

In some other countries it is a custom for one who is rendering business service to treat his client as a superior—to adopt toward him an attitude of excessive civility that seems to us like servility. With us it is simply necessary to act as an equal to an equal. This implies no admission of intellectual

or social equality on either side. The contact here is one of public service, and it is in this contact that the equality exists. This consideration is as necessary for the public as for the library assistant, but it is "good business" for the assistant to regard it even if the public's manners prove not to be up to standard.

The etiquette of taking pains is also valuable. It insures that an assistant shall do more than seems superficially required to find what a client wants and to do the thing that is wanted. It is not sufficient, for example, to direct him to the reference book for which he asks, when he really wants a specific item of information in it and the assistant could aid him to find it.

One of the chief avenues of approach to the library is now through the telephone. It does not seem to be generally realized that intercourse over a telephone wire requires exactly the same sort of courtesy as if the persons concerned were talking face to face. All telephone etiquette may be easily deduced from this. For instance, a personal caller announces himself at once; a telephone caller should do likewise. A person appearing at a house on a business errand and refusing to state his name or his business until he knew the name of the person with whom he was talking, would not go far. Again; one who asks to see another on business at his own instance is asking a favor. We habitually put it that way when we say "beg the favor of an interview." If there is any incidental trouble or bother, it must be assumed by the person who asks the

---

favor—not thrust by him on the other. If he calls at a house and ascertains that Mr. Smith is at home, he certainly would not say, “Ask him to come downstairs and wait for me while I do an errand around the corner.” If there is any waiting to do, he must do it himself. Yet similar treatment is constantly accorded to persons who are called up on the telephone.

The telephone is sometimes used to break into another’s orderly routine of business, which is somewhat like forcing one’s way into a cue before a ticket office or in a bank. It is as rude in one case as in the other.

**Records.** Records are essential to every business. Where a man is in a business for himself he wants to know its details, and where he is employed by someone else it is his duty to keep track of the work and report its status and progress, whether he personally cares to do so or not. This latter case is that of the librarian. He is employed to conduct an institution, and whether or not he personally considers the keeping of records a waste of time he must account for the property in his charge and be able to tell how and to what purpose he has administered it.

The librarian’s records are of two kinds: Those describing the condition of the property in his charge and those describing what he has done with it—the quality and extent of his work. The first are purely business records and are absolutely necessary. They are those kept by any business concern,

but are simpler, because the library does not sell goods. Cash and securities on hand are listed, and monetary transactions, either in cash or on credit, are recorded as they occur, in the manner described in any work on bookkeeping. Much of this work is often taken care of by the city authorities, by the Treasurer of the Board, or by a special officer, so that all the librarian has to do is to keep a cash account and sign vouchers. It should be borne in mind that a signature to a voucher means either personal knowledge or confidence in someone who has that knowledge. In a small library it is usually the former; in a large one, the latter. The signature of the person having first-hand knowledge of a bill should always appear somewhere. The points to be certified are the fact that the goods have been ordered under proper authority, that they have been received as ordered and that the price is as agreed, or is reasonable. In a large library these facts may have to be certified by different persons and all become matters of record with the filing of the bills.

No less important than purely financial records are those showing the condition of the material property of which the Library Board, and under it the librarian, is custodian—chiefly buildings and their contents, including books. These must be gone over at intervals and their existence and condition verified. Blank books for property inventory are to be bought, and only changes need be recorded after the first inventory. As for books, inventory methods are familiar to librarians. These have been taught and practiced in such detail that the taking



of book inventories has become a bugbear, and some librarians omit it, although it is part of their plain duty as custodians of public property. The remedy seems to be a simpler form of inventory, such as that described in *The Library Journal* May, 1917, although the actual identification of each book cannot be altogether omitted but must be carried out at more extended intervals—say every five years.

Records of the second type—those of library work, including circulation, reading-room attendance, registration, etc., are not so strictly matters of business and might be omitted without actual dereliction of duty. Their necessity is indicated, however, by two considerations: First, the librarian must have the particulars of his past work on record in order to test the success or failure of his methods, and as a guide in planning new work. Secondly, the public, to which he is ultimately responsible, has a right to know how he is fulfilling the trust that it reposes in him.

### SOME PERSONAL QUALITIES

**Honesty.** To be honest it is necessary to do more than simply to abstain from theft. To use for one's own purposes anything that rightfully belongs to another—money, property, time or service, is surely dishonest. Dishonesty is unbusiness-like, because the essence of business is agreement, and in a dishonest transaction one side is ignorant of its exact nature. If a library employs an assistant with the proviso that she shall be allowed to read or study for her own benefit when not otherwise

employed, that is a business transaction, but if work has been provided for such contingencies and she reads instead of doing it, she is dishonest and therefore unbusiness-like.

It may be thought that the flagrant dishonesty of direct theft is unlikely in a library assistant. Possibly that is so. But it is also unbusiness-like to give anyone an opportunity to be dishonest, whether he takes advantage of it or not. It is unbusinesslike to cash a check without requiring identification or to make a loan without security. It is not proper to complain that these precautions imply a suspicion of dishonesty. In like manner it is not proper for a librarian, or any of his staff to complain that he is treated as if he were expected to be dishonest—required, for instance, to submit vouchers for petty-cash expenditures, or to record fines and other receipts on some form of cash-register, or to sign a time-sheet.

Some persons with whom financial dishonesty would be quite unthinkable have no scruples about being dishonest with time and will even falsify time-sheets in so doing. Others have no objection to using as private property such library supplies as pens, pencils, paper, or even postage stamps.

It is sometimes difficult, however, to decide whether or not use of such things is official or private—whether, for instance, a question to be answered is addressed to one as an individual or as a library assistant. A good rule is to require the submission of all correspondence written on the

library letter-head to the librarian or some other official superior.

**Promptness.** It has been paradoxically said that much time is lost through promptness. This means, of course, that someone is always late and that those who are compelled to wait would have saved time by being equally late. The only remedy is for all to arrive together, and the only practical way is to agree upon an hour and keep to it. Wasting time is worse than wasting money, because a money loss may be replaced, while lost time is lost permanently.

Time and energy may be wasted by unwillingness to delegate work. He who is business-like in a small way is sometimes unbusiness-like when his business has grown large. He is unable to adapt himself to its growth. Time was when he could attend to all the details himself. He still tries to do so and the mere physical limitations bring failure. The librarian who once attended to his own cataloging, registration, book selection and finances and tries to continue when his institution has grown beyond this possibility, is not business-like any more, although he may have been eminently so at first. A business-like management delegates these things to competent lieutenants, while still retaining ultimate control over them.

The greatest time-waster is talk. It is unbusiness-like, in the course of work, to speak an unnecessary word. Some persons think out loud; they compel others to listen to processes that should have been performed silently. Others do not think

at all, and pour out a stream of useless words while they wait for the thoughts to come. Still others speak to the point, but repeat themselves over and over with the erroneous idea that the point is thus being emphasized. In particular it is unnecessary, in preferring a request, to lead up to it by a recital of reasons or a narrative of events. Make the request directly with a minimum of explanation. Defer argument until it is necessary. Requests are often granted as soon as heard.

It is confusing to listen to a long prelude when one is uncertain whither it is tending.

**Economy** is usually measured in terms of money, but its subject-matter is rather the things that cost money. When one has saved \$500 in his electric bills it means that he has used less electric current; when the saving is \$1,000 in wages, it means that fewer persons have been employed, or that they have been paid at a lower rate. When these things can be done without diminution or injury to service, it is our duty to do them at any time, but occasionally they may be necessary when they do involve such diminution or injury, as when income is lessened and work must be cut. The problem then becomes to ascertain where purchases or employment may be lessened with the least injury to service, looking at the matter in its largest aspect. The least injury for the current year might involve the greatest when subsequent years are taken into account, as when a valuable assistant is dropped or a progressive piece of work aban-

doned. The easiest economy is not always the best. In a library it is plainly the worst, because here the easiest way to save money is to buy fewer books, thus depriving the library of that without which it ceases to be a library. This is much like saving money by going without food. It seems at first as if all other items of library expense—up-keep of building, salaries of staff, etc.—were practically fixed, but it is better to keep on buying books, even if the hours are made shorter or the staff reduced in size. It is better not to catalog the books than not to buy them.

It is possible, however, to reduce expenditures for books without much reduction in real service. Much valuable material may be had for the asking. A reduced book appropriation may also be a good reason for purchasing valuable material at second-hand. This should always be material of permanent value; not partly used current literature. This latter is valuable only in proportion to the life before it; to buy at half-price a volume that is three-quarters worn out is no economy.

**Courage.** This deserves separate treatment, although it may be considered chiefly as an element or concomitant of qualities treated elsewhere. For instance, it is often involved in honesty, in the taking of chances, in economy and in truthfulness. For our present purposes, it is a disposition to go on with an enterprise without regard to possible disadvantage or injury to oneself or to the enterprise

itself. It may become rashness, if not tempered with—

**Caution**, which should properly be considered with it, in the light of what has been said under the heading, "Taking Chances." Caution is a disposition not to endanger the success of an enterprise by proceeding with it in the face of obstacles likely to bring about its failure. Courage and caution are not diametrical opposites, for one may possess both simultaneously, and it is not too much to say that the successful man must have both. As courage without caution is recklessness, so caution without courage is cowardice. Either lack may be fatal.

As an example of courage tempered by caution, we may cite a very frequent occurrence—the temptation to write a belligerent letter. Such a letter, written upon the impulse of the moment, and dispatched at once, is often a serious error, and it is irreparable. It might be an error also not to write at all. But if the letter is written and laid aside for a day, and then read critically, it will seldom be sent as it is. It will be toned down, perhaps destroyed. There are persons who can be depended on to write in this calmer fashion without delay. These are still more business-like, and this advice is not for them. For the quick tempered, no one can doubt that the procedure outlined above is the more business-like. The same may be done in the case of the spoken word.

The same or a similar method may be applied to contemplated acts that are likely to arouse op-

position. A frequent plan is to act first and let the opposition develop afterwards, when there is no chance of a reversal of policy. A better way is to announce that the act is contemplated and allow the opposition to develop in advance. It may be that it will be strong enough, or plausible enough, to induce a change of purpose. If not, those who oppose will at least feel that they have had a chance to state their case, and their good-will is retained. This is not the method of a "fighter," but it is that of a business man.

**Accuracy.** The library keeps what are practically charge accounts with large numbers of citizens; in a large city probably as many as are kept by a large department store. Most of these accounts are for books loaned, but some may be for fines or other charges, although these are usually cash payments. A mistake in these accounts is or ought to be as serious as one involving the same values, made in a commercial house. If an employee in a department store charged a customer wrongly with goods valued at \$5.00, or failed to charge him when he had purchased them, he would risk losing his position. The only difference between this situation and a mistake in charging a book worth \$5.00 in a public library is that the property in question is public and not private. The reason why mistakes in accuracy occur oftener in a public library than in business houses is doubtless because neither librarians nor assistants realize their seriousness to the same degree that they would be forced to realize it in trade or industry.

**Clearness.** In every official communication there must be no doubt whatever about the meaning. A common source of confusion is the return of a document without report. This may mean that there is no report to make, or it may signify that through some mistake it has not been seen. No query should be left unanswered in a questionnaire unless the reason for the omission is clear. A blank space, for instance, left on the A. L. A. statistics table opposite "Number of music rolls lent for home use," may mean that the library does not lend music rolls, or that the number has been omitted by mistake. Where checks of any kind are used on lists, their meaning should be clearly stated on the list, even where this is in accordance with established custom. For instance, when a list of titles is checked with the catalog and checks are placed opposite the lacking titles, the words "lacks checked" should appear on the list, so that no one may suppose that the checks indicate included titles, as might be the case.

Again, no communication, book or article, should be sent to anyone without an attached statement of its source and purpose.

Illegible handwriting sins against clearness. An illegible signature is unbusiness-like, although it may be rendered innocuous by the writer's name printed clearly on the letter-head. Regular writing is not necessarily legible. Old fashioned "copper-plate" is hard to read, whereas an irregular hand may be as clear as print. "Library hand," of course, is not necessary in every library communi-



cation; but it may be better to require it where the ordinary hand is not easily read.

**Carefulness.** One is naturally careful with his own property; less so, often, with that of others. As the property with the care of which one is charged increases in value, more and more care is necessary. One does not handle a book worth a hundred dollars as casually as a fifty-cent booklet. The woodwork of a shack may be treated in a thousand ways inapplicable to that of an expensive building. Librarians are not always alive to these distinctions, especially where the growth of their libraries in size and income has involved progress from one standard to another. Because they pinned notices to the woodwork of a cheap old building with thumb-tacks they treat the quartered oak finish of the new one in the same way, with ruinous results.

Carefulness and economy are very closely related; for much undue expenditure is simply to repair damage done by lack of care. Those who use the shears to remove screws, employ letter-heads for scratch paper, let the ink dry up and stand books on their front edges, must pay the bills; or rather, their libraries must pay the bills. If they had to pay personally, it would not be so bad.

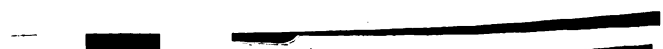

### SOME ARRANGEMENTS

**Order.** Things are in order when they are so placed that one knows where to find them. They are in the best order when *anyone* would know

where to find them. Books would be in order on the shelves if placed according to a plan understood by only one man, but his absence or death would mean confusion, though not a book had been displaced.

The appearance of neatness does not always mean order. A desk with pigeon-holed material and regular piles of documents may be one in which the owner can find absolutely nothing. "Filing" is the art of arranging loose material so that it can be found at a second's notice, and not by the filer alone, but by any intelligent person. In a small institution every one should understand about filing; in a large one there are experts to care for it. Some business men and some librarians prefer to place all loose material in a file, and to use a flat-top desk, empty when all work has been disposed of. Anything on the desk then means an unfinished item. Others do not care to call continually for material likely to be wanted frequently, and prefer a roll-top desk with pigeonholes in which such material is kept ready for use. Such an arrangement calls for frequent overhauling to prevent the accumulation of rubbish.

What is true of one desk is true of a whole building. Constant vigilance is necessary to prevent the accumulation of waste material. The building should be regarded as a great filing-case—everything in it likely to be needed at some time, all arranged so as to be available at a moment's notice—nothing kept for which use is not clearly anticipated. In particular, nothing should be packed and



stored unless plainly labelled and so disposed that any of it can be found and unpacked with the least possible trouble in the smallest possible period of time.

**Sequence.** This is an important item in orderly arrangements, both in space and time. It is sometimes natural and sometimes arbitrary. If you place books on a shelf in order of size, that is a natural arrangement; if alphabetically by authors, it is arbitrary; for our alphabetic order is itself arbitrary. Here, as frequently, the arbitrary order is the better, because it corresponds to more items of knowledge than the other. It so happens that one who wants a book generally knows the author's name, and if so, he knows the initial of it and its order in the alphabet; whereas the size of the book, though it is a definite mathematical quantity, he usually does not know. There are thus often excellent reasons for doing things in a perfectly arbitrary sequence.

Sequence is not so much for one's own convenience as for that of others. You may know exactly the location of every book in a confused pile, but it would be difficult to describe it to anyone else. Any kind of sequence is usable to the one who has learned it, but the ones that are most generally known are the most useful. *b k t e j a* is a perfectly good alphabetical sequence to him who knows it; but *a b c d e f* is better, because millions know it. *1 2 3 4 5 6* is better still, because it is known to millions more. And *2 3 4*, or *6 9 1* has its definite se-

quential meaning, whereas x q c and b t a mean nothing at first sight.

**Method.** Method means simply a definite way of doing things. It is better to decide on such ways and adhere to them, because then a large part of the work becomes a matter of routine and is done faster and with less effort. If methods are the same everywhere in a library an assistant becomes used to them once for all and no readjustment is necessary. These reasons do not apply, of course, where it is absolutely necessary to adjust methods to varying conditions, but this case is not encountered frequently.

**"Follow-up" Methods.** Where the business man cannot see an immediate result from something that he does, he now takes nothing for granted, but investigates. If what he did should have produced a result, he tries to find out why it failed, or he repeats it. In doing this a distinction must be made between cases where he has a right to expect a result and those where he has no such right. For instance, if he tells a subordinate to do a thing, he has a right to expect that it will be done. As a rule, no elaborate "follow-up" system to ensure that orders shall be carried out is necessary. If they are not obeyed, the offender is replaced with someone who will do as he is told. If on the other hand the thing done is the sending of an appeal to buy something, or a request for a favor, the expectation of a response is not a matter of right. If none comes and one is wanted it is the sender's business to "follow-up" the appeal and see what the matter

is. For this purpose business men have devised all sorts of "follow-up" systems. In the library comparatively few matters need to be "followed up." The sending of over-due postals is a "follow-up" system. In the business transactions of the library, such as the ordering and receipt of books and periodicals, close "follow-up" methods are often necessary. The arrival of the expected item, or a definite report on it, should be insisted on, and in default, an inquiry should be sent. The receipt of periodicals, in particular, should be checked and followed up very promptly, since failure to arrive will be noted by every reader who is accustomed to use them. A good plan is to post the **expected** time of arrival of papers and magazines. This often avoids useless queries.

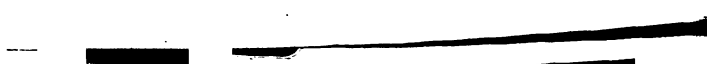
In a library, material of various kinds is often referred by the Librarian to some member of the staff, or by one department to another. This belongs to the class of things that one should not be required to follow up; but there is often a time-limit, and it is a good plan for the sender to keep a memorandum and use the telephone when necessary. Material that regularly makes the rounds should be accompanied by a schedule bearing the names of those to whom it goes in rotation, with the expected dates of arrival. A personal dated receipt, opposite the date, makes easy the fixing of responsibility for a delay.

### SOME WORDS IN CONCLUSION

**Complaints.** The business method of handling a complaint, whether from outside or from inside,

is to have it put in writing and refer it at once to the person of whom complaint is made; or where there is no personal object, to the one most nearly concerned. The officer in authority has thus both sides before him and can act intelligently. This officer, in a library, may be the librarian or the head of a department. Different librarians will naturally draw in different places the line between matters that must be referred to the chief authority and trivial things that need not be so referred. But any one who makes a complaint to a subordinate has the right, of course, to appeal to the chief, and the librarian will naturally give such an appeal particular attention. Members of the staff, however, who constantly appeal and are constantly overruled should remember that this must tell against them in the long run. Members whose rank is equal, or nearly so, and who are inclined to mutual complaint, should ponder the dictum: "If two subordinates quarrel persistently, get rid of *both*." A chief cannot waste too much time in trying to find out where the fault lies.

There may be some difference of opinion about complaints that lie on the borderline of accusation, where some one, that is, is suspected of actual wrong-doing—theft, possibly. Immediate reference to the accused here may be an injustice, and one should be very sure of his ground first. Where the need of assurance, however, is made the excuse for spying and all sorts of amateur detective work, the situation may easily become intolerable. Where actual criminality may come into consideration, it



is better, in most cases, to consult with the authorities at once.

Large business concerns are now centralizing their handling of complaints in a single department headed by a person selected for skill in making adjustments smoothly.

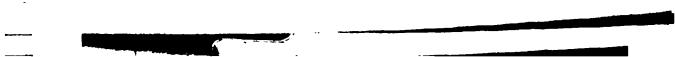
Although it is hardly likely that libraries will generally be able to adopt this method in its entirety, it is a good plan for a librarian to delegate the handling of specially difficult adjustments to some member of the staff, or some department, that has shown ability in preserving or developing goodwill.

**Relations With Other Libraries.** Such an institution as a public library has no competitors or rivals, in a business sense. Reasons for suspicion or jealousy among libraries are conspicuously absent. The temptation to be unethical exists chiefly in the exchange of members of the staff. It is generally considered that when one librarian wishes to offer a position to a member of another's staff, he shall previously, or at any rate simultaneously, notify the other librarian that he is doing so. This is, however, not universally admitted. Some, while agreeing that the other librarian, as a matter of courtesy, should be ultimately informed, believe it to be proper to sound the candidate informally, before doing so. Some candidates make application for a position without notifying their own chiefs. Without going too far into ethics, it may be said that the best policy for all concerned in the long run, is one of complete frankness on all sides. Es-

pecially, action on an assistant's part, that raises suspicion of an attempt to secure a salary increase, independently of all considerations of loyalty, service, or real betterment, will ultimately react against that assistant.

Personal applications for promotion or appointment are looked upon differently in different places. In Europe they are the rule. An important professorship in a university there may be given only to one who formally applies for it. Such an application in the United States might seriously prejudice the candidate's chances of success. Some librarians like, or at any rate do not mind, receiving requests for promotion or appointment. With others they are not felt to be recommendations.

**Relations With the Board.** In business, boards of directors were once confined to banks and large industrial institutions. Now it is common for business to be operated by corporations. A board of directors is the representative of the stockholders who own the business and are supreme in authority. But although they, and the board in their behalf, are supreme, they are not experts and they must employ an expert to operate the business. It would be unbusiness-like to do otherwise. In a public library the citizens, collectively, own the institution: they correspond to the stockholders of a corporation. They, or their representatives, choose a board of trustees or directors to act on their behalf; to hold the property and manage the institution. The board employs an expert, a librarian, to operate the library for it. The relationship is therefore that





between owners and an expert manager. The board knows in general what it wants and whether it is getting it. If not, it should try another librarian. But ordinarily it is ill-advised if it interferes in any way with the details of administration. On the other hand the librarian must remember that the board has an undoubted right to do anything that it chooses. It is the librarian's duty to call the board's attention to any course that it may be pursuing to the library's detriment, but if this is persisted in, there are only two alternatives—acquiescence or resignation.

